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further facts regarding this project, both from Mr. Bowker and Dr. Claxton, formulate a statement, with alternatives; and place the information before the Board.

Library Building Plans

The secretary read a letter from Mr. W. R. Eastman, of Albany, in which he proposed a plan for the printing and sale of illustrations of library plans, on the loose-leaf principle. The secretary was instructed to collect further facts regarding the practicality of the plan and place them before the Board.

South American Literature

The secretary referred to the lack of any good lists of books of South American literature and the growing demand therefor. He was instructed to investigate the means of securing the compilation of suitable lists.

Periodical Cards

Mr. William Stetson Merrill, editor of

the A. L. A. periodical cards, suggested the following extension of the card work of the Board:

"Whenever an opportunity arises for the Board to utilize the analytical work of a collaborating library by using its cards for printing copy, or in case one of the collaborators, wishing to secure printed cards for a serial, furnishes 'copy,' the editor would insert a notice in the next shipment to subscribers stating that the Publishing Board will print a set of cards for the said serial, provided enough libraries indicate—within a given time—their wish to buy them at the usual rates. The analytical cards will usually be either for the back volumes of serials on our list, not previously indexed and not done by the Library of Congress; or for other serials containing monographic material."

The Board voted to authorize Mr. Merrill to take such steps as above suggested whenever he deems it to the interest of libraries, each case, as it arises, to be decided by a representative of the Board.

Adjourned.

LEAGUE OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONS

The annual meeting of the League of Library Commissions was held at Chicago at the LaSalle Hotel, on the afternoon of December 28th and 29th, 1916. The first paper of the afternoon was by Miss Clara F. Baldwin of Minnesota, on "Summer library schools; Training given by library commissions." Miss Baldwin confined her paper to the methods and conduct of summer schools from the library commission standpoint, leaving questions of policy of professional training to the A. L. A. Committee which is undertaking an investigation of summer schools. Miss Baldwin emphasized the distinct field for summer schools and the importance of restricting the attendance to people already in the work and holding paid positions. She reviewed the standard set by the A. L. A. Committee on Library Training in 1905, and those set at the round table on Summer School Problems held by the League at Asheville in 1907. There are at present but seven summer schools entirely under the direction of library commis-

sions, including those of New York State and Wisconsin. Two regular schools, Simmons and University of Illinois, offer summer library courses and seven universities offer summer library courses. Chautauqua and Riverside are independent of any state supervision. As a result of investigation, Miss Baldwin found that most of the schools are generally attaining the standard set in 1907. With one exception, schools offering six weeks' courses require the student to have a library position or definite appointment, and the majority of them require a high school education. The general standard seems to be three hours a day devoted to lectures with an average of two hours of preparation or practice work in each subject. From 25 to 40 hours are devoted to cataloging and classification in the six weeks' course, the usual hours being 30 or 32. Book selection and Reference receive from 20 to 31 hours, showing that the recommendation of one hour per day for Book selection, including Bibliography,

Book selection and Binding is too high, even when Children's Work is included.

Reports indicate an increase in the amount of work done and the danger seems to lie in over-crowding rather than otherwise.

Special attention was called to the policy of New York State summer school in offering in alternate years two elementary courses of three weeks instead of a general six weeks' course. One course dealt with classification and cataloging, the other with reference, trade and subject bibliography, and government documents. At Simmons College the summer courses are also arranged in two or three week periods. At Columbia University five separate courses are offered, each consisting of five hours a week lectures, with outside problems. Each student may take three courses and the cataloging is restricted to librarians, library assistants or librarians under appointment.

The special work of other summer courses was noted. Miss Baldwin noted the increased attention which is being given to the training of school librarians and teachers in charge of high school libraries and indicated what is being done by individual states. The increase in the number of students at summer schools was also noted and it was shown that four commission schools are limiting attendance to those living in their own states.

The A. L. A. standard of one instructor to every fifteen students is being followed by every school reporting.

The practice in regard to giving pass cards and certificates varies, but the usual form is a statement that the student has completed the course and that records may be had upon application. There seems to be danger in issuing any kind of a certificate, that inefficient persons will use the certificate to impose upon library trustees and the general public who are ignorant of what library training implies.

Other methods of instruction are given by library institutes, and courses in normal schools. Twenty-one commissions give

instruction to students in their own libraries.

In concluding Miss Baldwin thus sums up the problem:

"If this problem is to be solved, we are agreed it is of the utmost importance that summer courses should either be under commission direction or closely affiliated with them. Instruction given by members of a library commission staff has the advantage of better knowledge of library conditions and the possibility of follow-up work.

"The problem of training for work in small libraries still remains to be solved by each commission for its own state. It is to be hoped that the discussions on standardization of library service and certification of librarians may throw further light on the question, and open the way to better service."

The discussion centered around two points: The division of the courses into two parts as practiced by Albany and Simmons, and the question of admitting students who do not hold actual library positions or appointments, as is done by one university summer school. Mr. Watson of New York and other advocates of the two or three weeks' courses, pointed out that no less training was received because the work in particular courses was concentrated and there was the added advantage that some persons who could not come for the six weeks could come for three in order to take training in those subjects in which they particularly needed it.

In defense of the admitting of students not holding positions, the university librarians present maintained that the library course had to be offered as other university courses upon the same conditions or requirements and that the grade of students was usually high, generally with a previous college education, and that there might be an advantage to a town with an incompetent librarian in having some other resident of the town take the summer library training in the hope of supplanting the inefficient librarian. Those engaged in commission work felt that the

position requirement was a protection to the general library interests of the state because summer school graduates without positions claimed library training when applying for positions. The purpose of the summer course was not to train persons who wish to enter the library profession, but to give assistance to those who are actually doing the work. Miss Downey pointed out also that such a requirement was a protection to the regular library school.

Following this discussion, Mr. P. L. Windsor, of the University of Illinois, outlined the problem of the certification of librarians. Mr. Windsor first pointed out the distinction between civil service and certification. The former provides both for fitness at the time of appointment and protection after appointment. Certification provides no protection but assures competency for certain grades of service. So far in library work the only system of certification of librarians has been in connection with county libraries, as in California. Civil service is local, certification is state-wide. The advantages of the certification are that it would limit the choice of library boards to qualified individuals and it would protect the library against the unfit. Library boards with high standards would be upheld and those with low standards would be blocked. The certificate system is aimed at the average library or the library below the standard. Where changes for the worst might occur in a progressive library board, the library is protected against undesirable change. Certification of librarians will certainly increase the influence of the state commission over the libraries of the state, and will serve this purpose better than state aid. Perhaps the most potent argument of all for a state-wide certification is that it will forestall a civil service law. The experience of small cities at least has proved that civil service in the library is unsuccessful. In the discussion which followed Mr. Windsor's remarks Miss Tyler and Miss Doren outlined the steps that have been taken in Ohio. Miss Doren ques-

tioned whether she personally would like to choose her assistants from a certified list but saw no insuperable objection. She called attention to the merit system as explained in *New York Libraries* for November, 1916. Mr. Hodges of Cincinnati explained that four years ago there was nearly passed by the Ohio legislature a law for civil service in libraries and that such legislation was avoided by the argument that trustees of local institutions should not be handicapped in their rights in looking after the best interests of the library. Further discussion brought out the questions as to whether certificates should be granted on purely educational qualifications and whether there should be promotional certificates from lower grades to higher. All seem to agree that such a plan of certification would involve the standardization of libraries themselves or rather the classification of libraries according to certain standards. Mr. Brett outlined to some extent the provisions of the bill which the Ohio State Library Association is trying to formulate.

As a result of this discussion, Miss Wales, in the consideration of a request from the president of the American Library Association that the discussion of this association be reported to the Council, moved the following resolution which was seconded and passed: That the Council of the American Library Association be asked to consider the matter of the certification of librarians considering particularly the following points: the classification of librarians as to its standardization, who shall be required to hold a library certificate, shall certificates be granted for technical or general education, what is the definition of assistant librarian?

The final topic of the afternoon was "Aims and underlying principles of commission work," introduced by Mr. Henry N. Sanborn. The paper was in the nature of an editorial comment on the new edition of the *League Handbook*. It seems that some commissions have evolved further than others from extensive to intensive

work, even though some of the extensive workers are spending more money and employing more persons. Quoting previous editions of the handbook, "The common aim (of a library commission) is to inspire communities with a desire for library service, to foster zeal in library work and to promote the efficiency of libraries already established." In 1910 there appeared in the handbook, "and in 29 states to maintain a system of traveling libraries to aid in solving the problem of making free books accessible to all the people."

A few sentences from the paper will give the important points:

"The traveling library idea, which at the very first had no place among library commission aims, has grown until it is the chief work of about a third of the existing commissions."

"Traveling libraries are spectacular, they appeal to the imagination, they make a showy and tangible record, and they count tremendously with legislators in getting increased appropriations."

"Miss Titcomb wisely concluded her paper at Asbury Park with the opinion 'that a traveling library should go no farther than to promote a desire for a library for the community.'"

"The modern conception of a state library—now almost generally—is of a library to serve all inhabitants of the state. It will need a well equipped reference department, both in staff and books, if it makes any real attempt at service. It seems useless then, for a commission in the same state, to attempt to do reference work and to employ reference librarians and build up open shelf reference collections."

"The same criticism may be made with justification, I believe, of the work with study clubs. It would seem that the specialist connected with the university extension divisions of the state university should be better able to make out study outlines in his own subject than can the reference librarian of the traveling library department."

"If these criticisms are fair, the conclusion seems to be that where library commissions are independent of other state supported educational institutions and maintain traveling library departments, they should not try to do work which other institutions can do better or as well, but should use the traveling libraries to furnish general reading; to apply books to study clubs in co-operation with other institutions directing the work; to furnish general reading to rural schools, and to lend books to small public libraries as a help to supply the demands upon them.

"Traveling libraries are a temporary substitute for public libraries. If the commissions do their work well, traveling libraries will in time become unnecessary, and every commission should bend every effort towards doing away with the need of traveling libraries."

"The importance of field work cannot, it seems to me, be exaggerated."

"The growth in field work in contrast to the growth in traveling library work is a healthy growth."

"Public library efficiency and public library support seem to bear a very direct ratio to the amount of attention the libraries receive from the state body which is supposed to look after their interests and standards."

"Another similar question which the reading of this Handbook keeps bringing to mind is whether we are not undertaking too many things and so dissipating our energies."

"Our principle is to start any movement that is good for the libraries to undertake and to give it the backing of our approval and service, but as soon as a movement is well under way to give it over to any other organization that can manage it better than we. In the narrowest unchallengeable field of commission endeavor there is so much more to be done than the ordinary commission has time or funds even to undertake, that it seems to me a commission should undertake nothing that any one else can do as well or better."

"A fact too often overlooked in our League discussions, often causes misunderstanding. This is the fact that we really have as a League only a very slight common basis for comparison."

"In this diversity of conditions and its resultant misunderstandings lies our greatest difficulty as a League of Library Commissions. Have we as individual commissions been too prone to model our work on other commissions rather than adapt our work to our own peculiar conditions? In spite of all these differences have we not a common aim and is not that common aim first and always even at a sacrifice of all else, by establishing and nourishing town, township, or county libraries, to bring about universal public library service at local expense?"

Those who discussed the paper seemed to be laboring under the misunderstanding that traveling libraries were attacked as of no importance.

The opinion was expressed that there would always be certain sections of the state which would need traveling libraries and several expressed the opinion that traveling libraries were necessary in the beginning of state commission work. Several beside the speaker felt that a system of county traveling libraries would be superior to a state traveling library.

Mr. Locke of Toronto expressed the opinion that the farmers of Ontario were not getting any benefit from the traveling libraries because they felt that they were getting something for nothing. He is attempting to evangelize the province so the localities will establish their own libraries rather than depend upon the provincial traveling libraries.

At the second session on Friday afternoon, Miss Mary E. Downey read a paper on "State library extension," in which she outlined very completely the many ways in which a state commission can help in establishing libraries and in increasing the efficiency of the libraries of the state, college and institutional as well as the public. The threefold purpose of state extension

was expressed as increased efficiency of libraries already established, a free public library in every community, and proper library facilities throughout the public library system.

She called attention to the possibilities of a library commission as a bureau of information. The visits of a library organizer or secretary of the commission she showed could be of value in any conceivable activity of the public library, from advice to library boards to advice on janitor service. She showed the possibilities of co-operation with such organizations as the state library commission with a system of district meetings or institutes and the state federation of women's clubs. She pointed out that state traveling library systems were not practicable in all states but that county library systems were the solution. Great emphasis was laid upon the opportunity of library commissions to endorse and control the state library movement which is so rapidly growing today, with the prediction that if the commissions do not secure this co-operation soon, they will lose it entirely. She enlarged upon the possibilities of the schools as distributing centers and as guides in the children's reading and that teachers with proper training and instruction were the most logical and efficient agents in developing the children's taste for reading.

Attention was called to the need of a general list of libraries in the United States, so that trustworthy comparisons could be made between libraries of the same class. In line with this suggestion, Miss Downey recommended a committee of the League to standardize its own work, setting forth the best things being done by the League, and making a classification and standardization of libraries according to size and service.

She criticised the extravagance in state library work, especially the extravagance of maintaining a state library which was but little more than an added library to the capital city and which did not extend its service to all the inhabitants of the state.

Other problems treated particularly were the extension of city libraries by means of branches, good book week, and the work of library schools in following up their graduates.

In the discussion on standardization suggested by Miss Downey, it was pointed out that small libraries will always have a larger per capita circulation than libraries in larger towns. Miss Ahern said she never was in favor of judging the usefulness of a library by its circulation. It should be by the proportion of inhabitants who were users of the library. Some reported that the large amount of fiction read in smaller towns accounted for the increased circulation and Miss Robinson reported that the percentage of fiction read was likely to be less in a small town.

Following this discussion, the reports of the various committees were read. Mr. Watson, as chairman of the Committee on Aids to New Commissions, reported that they had used various publications of the different commissions and the model law printed by the League. He pointed out that the Committee worked in the dark because it did not know local conditions nor who was behind the local movement. He said the committee had urged the commission as the best form, although the ideal is to have all state library activities under one agency. He said the committee had in hand the material for a handbook to aid new commissions.

The report of the Committee on Publications, Mr. Asa Wynkoop, chairman, called attention to the publication of a list for prison libraries, published by the New York State Library, with the formal approval of the League of Library Commissions. The first part is already issued and

the second part is ready for the press. He recommended the publication in pamphlet form of a report on qualifications of librarians presented by a special committee of the Indiana Library Association printed in 1911 in the Library Occurrent. He also suggested that the Publication Committee act as a clearing house for all commission and other publications of importance to libraries and to put each of the commissions into immediate communication with the particular commission or agency issuing these publications.

Miss Baldwin suggested that this committee also tried to secure information ahead of publication, so as to avoid duplication by any publishing agency. A motion was made and carried that the Publishing Board should act as such a clearing house, and Mr. Watson suggested that the A. L. A. be used as a medium for printing this information.

Following Miss Downey's report on "Good book week," she made a motion that a paper be given at the next League meeting, giving an account of some of the methods used by public libraries in the various states during "Good book week."

The report of the Nominating committee was unanimously accepted, making the following members officers: President, Mrs. Elizabeth Claypool Earl, Indiana; First Vice-President, Mrs. Minnie C. Budlong, North Dakota; Second Vice-President, Miss Rebecca W. Wright, Vermont, and member of the Executive Committee for one year, Miss Minnie W. Leatherman of North Carolina. The Secretary holds office for another year.

HENRY N. SANBORN,
Secretary.